



Caribbean Artist Gustave Nouel brings the 400 years of Rembrandt celebration to Aruba

2006 is a landmark year for Holland and art lovers around the world as they celebrate 400 years of the work of Rembrandt van Rijn, considered by many as one of the greatest painters in European art history. His contributions to art came in a period that historians call the Dutch Golden Age, roughly coinciding with the seventeenth century, in which Dutch world power, political influence, science, commerce, and culture, in particular, painting, reached their pinnacle.

Throughout this year festivities have been scheduled, especially in the month of his birthday, July. Most have centered around Leiden, the city of his birth, and Amsterdam, where he spent most of his life, and where he died and is interred.

There are few names of artists well known to laymen, but Rembrandt is one of them, his contributions to art and painting having been immortalized in film and literature. Even though he was one of the few artists to be recognized for his great talent in his lifetime, his personal life is a story of loss and tragedy. His wife died very young, nearly all his children died in infancy, and he outlived the one son that survived to adulthood.

Noted Aruban artist and teacher Gustave Nouel, who makes his home in Holland, is back on the island for the summer. He is conducting a series of workshops for both island residents and visitors through the months of July and August. This past Saturday July 15, the day of Rembrandt's birthday, he brought the 400th year celebration to Aruba with a workshop focused on the artist and his techniques in the art room of the Antraco Store on L.G. Smith Boulevard.

Students of varying ages and skills learned with a hands on system that produced remarkable results in only one morning, and gave them insights into the mastery of artists such as Rembrandt and Nouel. One student, who is an accomplished sculptor, remarked "I didn't realize that painting and blending colors is so difficult." Rembrandt was particularly noted for his unique use of light and shadow, and Nouel demonstrated that the use of modern materials such as acrylics could reproduce the work of the Dutch master, if you are well versed in painting technique.

The students found the experience enlightening, and Nouel is continuing his workshops over the summer, but using Aruba as his subject, and at various hotels. This Tuesday, July 18, he will continue his program with a two-hour workshop at the Tamerijn all-inclusive resort beginning at 10:00 AM. The morning class will be an introduction to painting techniques, conducted in the hotel. It will include all the materials plus the workbook, authored by Gustave Nouel, which normally sells separately for \$19.99. There will also be a practical painting session held on the beach in the evening from 5:00 to 7:00 PM, where students can apply their new found knowledge under Gustave Nouel's guidance. Inscription for the morning workshop is \$66.00 and for both sessions, the package price is \$99. On Wednesday, he will conduct the same workshop at the Amsterdam Manor. Those that are interested can inscribe at the concierge at their hotel, or call Multimedia International, telephone # 583-9039 for more information.

Like Rembrandt, Gustave Nouel is that rare artist that has been recognized in his lifetime, a noted portraitist whose works hang in the home of the Royal House of Orange, and a number of museums. One of the most respected artists of Europe and the Caribbean; he takes great pleasure in introducing novices to painting techniques, and discovering and nurturing talent. Island visitors can now take advantage of this rare opportunity to benefit from his artistry and expertise during 400 Years of Rembrandt Celebration.

In 2006 it will have been 400 years ago that Rembrandt, Holland's greatest 17th-century painter, was born. The perfect occasion to train the spotlight on this Dutch master throughout the year. Like no other artist, Rembrandt managed to capture light and shadows in paint. In addition, his drawings and etchings are unequalled. Various locations in The Hague will organize special events to celebrate this anniversary.

A summer with Rembrandt

The Mauritshuis Museum, The Hague

26 June through 18 September, 2006

The Mauritshuis Museum in The Hague will give centre stage to Rembrandt in summer 2006. The museum's permanent collection includes ten of the world famous painter's most celebrated works. In a special presentation, the Mauritshuis will exhibit an impressive overview of Rembrandt's skills: from his early Simeon's song of praise (1631) to Self-portrait (1669, the year of his death). Both works were recently restored along with Homer (1663). The three paintings have undergone a wonderful metamorphosis thanks to their restoration. This will be the first time the public will be able to find out about the restoration processes and the findings of the technical examinations of the paintings. The restored paintings will be displayed prominently among Rembrandt's other works in the summer presentation. A richly illustrated booklet entitled Rembrandt in the Mauritshuis will be published to accompany the presentation

Art lovers celebrate 400 years of Rembrandt

By Toby Sterling

Amsterdam, Netherlands - Art lovers celebrated the 400th anniversary of Dutch painter Rembrandt van Rijn's birth, honouring the great genius of the Renaissance in northern Europe with festivities on Saturday ranging from the comical to the profound.

Activities in the Netherlands centred around the two cities of Leiden, where Rembrandt was born July 15, 1606, and Amsterdam, where he painted his greatest masterpieces, but suffered personal tragedies before his death in 1669.

In Leiden, fans in period dress as nobles and beggars, priests and prostitutes led a torch-lit procession to a statue of Rembrandt in the city centre. There they hung a garland around the statue's neck and toasted his memory, many with a drink of traditional fine Dutch jenever, or gin. Others drank beer.

'Won acclaim from an early age, and his work was always in demand'

In Amsterdam, an opera based on Rembrandt's life opens Saturday night at the Royal Carre theater.

Amsterdam was also home to a series of major exhibitions of Rembrandt's art, probably the most extensive showing of his work ever attempted.

Many of his canvases were already housed in the national Rijksmuseum, while many of his etchings and drawings were in the Rembrandt House, where he lived during his most productive period. These have been complemented with pieces borrowed from museums around the world to bring out different aspects of his life and work.

Rembrandt owes his enduring popularity in part to his wide-ranging gifts as a painter and etcher: his masterful use of light and shadow; his creative compositions; and his ability to be sharply accurate and softly impressionistic by turns.

Harder to define was his ability to capture the essence of his subjects' characters, while showing a deep compassion for their humanity.

If he were alive today, he might not be surprised at all at the hoopla surrounding the anniversary. Unlike many visionary artists who were not appreciated during their lifetimes - notably countryman Vincent van Gogh - Rembrandt was aware of his talent. He won acclaim from an early age, and his work was always in demand.

But his life wasn't always happy. His beloved wife Saskia died when she was 29. Rembrandt spent money faster than he made it, and went bankrupt and was evicted from his home in 1658.

He also outlived his son Titus, the only one of his four children with Saskia to survive infancy. Other relationships were also troubled. Rembrandt himself was buried in an unmarked grave.

His birthday was not only an occasion for appreciating his art, but has also been a major tourism draw for the Netherlands this summer.

Stores were selling anything and everything Rembrandt, from the usual posters, coffee mugs and T-shirts on offer at museum stores to more esoteric kitsch: Rembrandt spaghetti, Rembrandt chocolate, Rembrandt wine.

In Amsterdam's Rembrandt Square, the city has set up a life-size bronze recreation of his most famous painting, "The Night Watch" - a perfect chance for tourists to photograph themselves standing next to sword-wielding 17th-century soldiers with goatees and mustaches.

A lone expert in the Netherlands made headlines Friday with the claim that actually, Rembrandt was born in 1607, not 1606, as is commonly believed. But it seemed unlikely that all the festivities will be repeated again next year